DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 205 865 CG 015 356

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TITLE Work and Female Identity.
PUB DATE Mar 81
NOTE 21p.: Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Association for Women in Psychology (8th, Boston, MA, March 5-8, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Characteristics; Administrator Qualifications; Career Ladders; *Congruence (Psychology); *Employed Women; Individual Characteristics; Nontraditional Occupations; *Occupational Mobility; Promotion (Occupational); *Role Conflict; *Self Concept; Sex Differences; Socialization; State of the Art Reviews

ABSTRACT

In climbing an organizational ladder dominated by males, the professional woman encounters obstacles to the more traditional feminine behaviors and mannerisms to which she may be accustomed. These obstacles may erode her sense of identity, creating difficulties both inside and outside of her work environment. Traditional distinctions between masculine and feminine characteristics still strongly influence expected managerial behavior. Research indicates that appropriate managerial characteristics are those which have traditionally been considered masculine characteristics. Women managers are expected to be feminine and display traditional feminine characteristics, yet fit the managerial role which requires masculine behaviors. Women, whose early socialization does not enhance the development of a strong sense of directedness, are influenced by a number of factors to change their behaviors, thus altering their basic identity in order to be successful in the masculine business world. The woman manager often finds herself in a double bind situation, and even the successful managerial woman faces confusion in adapting appropriate behaviors. Consequences to her physical and psychological well-being are likely to be quite significant. (Author/NRB)

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Work and Female Identity

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

"To succeed in management it would appear a woman has to be all things to all people." So says Marion M. Wood, Assistant Professor of Management Communications, School of Business Administration at the University of Southern California. Professor Wood continues "Assuming she [the woman manager] is competent and providing she has the support of her husband and/or another influential male she is cautioned to be realistic in her expectations... [and to be controlled in other behaviors and] to act like a man but stay feminine " (1975, p. 66).

Professor Wood comes to these conclusions following interviews with one hundred women and their male supervisors, subordinates, and peers. Her pronouncement sounds pessimistic and perhaps a bit extreme. Yet I tend to agree with Marion Wood that to succeed in high level positions a woman must be all things to all people and this must involve a considerable cost to the individual woman's psychological and physical well being.

Although in recent years there has been a good deal of research on women's acquisition of high level positions a data search reveals there is little research on the intrapsychic struggle caused by conflicts between familiar and expected behaviors for women in management.

I would like to focus my remarks on aspects of the professional woman's struggles in work as they relate to her maintaining a consistent sense of self. A woman develops a sense of identity or sense of self based partly on her gender. She is female and in fact learns to behave quite differently than a man does. (I will substantiate this position in a minute.) Because the professional woman I am speaking of is climbing the ladder in an organization dominated

by males, who are quite distinctive from females, she encounters a number of obstacles to her behaving in the more traditional feminine manner she may be accustomed to. This I suggest tends to erode her sense of identity thus creating difficulty for her in the work environment and outside as well.

The formation of identity is considered by numerous psychologists, notably Erikson, as salient for continued development and psychological well being. In fact the loss of a sense of identity is an indication of psychological illness. In addition, a sense of identity is essential for one to be able to set goals and succeed at these goals. A goal might include, for example, being a successful manager.

There is a good deal of data that substantiates my previous statement that women learn to behave differently than men behave. We have been apprised, in the wake of women's liberation, of the distinctive socialization processes that boys and girls are faced with. Even before the infant girl leaves the hospital bedecked in her pink "going home" outfit she is being exposed to a plethora of subtle and overt stimuli that are quite different than the boy in blue is exposed to. This socialization along sexual lines is continuous and pervasive throughout her life. Differences in home or immediate environments will produce significant differences in individual women's development of a sense of self. Even with the differences among women due to varying home environments, the societal rubrics tend to restrictively socialize and restrictively define all women with the same characteristics.

This restrictive socialization shows up in society's perceptions of the different sexes. Broverman and her colleagues conducted a study of approximately one thousand subjects to determine what characteristic were attributed to males and to females. They found that males and females agreed with each other on the characteristics of their own and the opposite sex. Broverman broke the characteristics into two clusters: a competency cluster and a warmth-expressive cluster.

Feminine characteristics in the competency cluster include:

not at all aggressive
not at all independent
very emotional
very subjective
very easily influenced
very submissive
not at all competitive
very illogical
very home oriented
not at all skilled in business
has difficulty making decisions
almost never acts as a leader
very uncomfortable about being aggressive
not at all ambitious
very dependent

In the masculine competency cluster characteristics are almost all entirely opposite of those in the feminine competency cluster and they include such characteristics as:

very aggressive
very independent
not at all emotional
very objective
not at all easily influenced
very dominant
very competitive
very logical
very worldly
very skilled in business
can make decisions easily
almost always acts as a leader
not at all uncomfortable about being aggressive
very ambitious
not at all dependent

The characteristics in the feminine warmth-expressive cluster include:

very talkative
very tactful
very gentle
very aware of feelings of others
very strong need for security

Again the characteristics in the masculine warmth-expressive cluster are nearly all opposite of those in the feminine warmth-expressive cluster. These include:

not at all talkative
very blunt
very rough
not at all aware of feelings of others
very little need for security

(Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz, 1972, p. 63)

Obviously the stereotypic concepts of women, and men also, are restrictive. I feel that although it is not appropriate to categorize women's or men's behaviors exclusively it is as Ravenna Helson has stated "possible to distinquish two styles of creative personality, one more common in men and the other more common in women" (1972, p. 43).

People see men and women differently. They see different behaviors and expect different things from either of the sexes. Sex role stereotypes of this sort are not limited by socioeconomic class, sex or religious background according to Broverman. She states that these findings tend to "confirm the existence of pervasive and persistent sex-role stereotypes" (1972, p.64).

Women encounter numerous obstacles because of these stereotypic attitudes. Not to be mislead that these stereotypes have been disspelled by significant strides that women have made in recent years I point to the pending state of ERA legislation. Apparently not only are men still not convinced that women are not equal, much less similar, but women themselves, in large numbers, oppose the ERA for various reasons but by this opposition insure that women will continue to be perceived as less then men.

One of the traditionally held stereotypes about women is that they can not, should not, or dont't want to become involved in any serious work outside the home. This is partly based on the fact that historically women have not worked outside the home in professional positions with the exception of World War II when women quite satisfactorily "filled in" for men. The exception to the rule is the old maid, who for reasons of necessity, must work. Her behavior can simply be

explained as deviant. Her deviance is expressed by two behaviors, that of not being married and that of working.

The idea of the working woman as deviant or maladjusted was quite common as recently as the decade of the seventies. Although terms such as deviant or maladjusted are not used today the restraint in terminology does not necessarily mean the actual perceptions and subsequent behaviors of people have changed. The terminology more likely to be used today is that of the token woman. (Kanter, 1977) The token woman like any token person is not labelled deviant but she is odd. She sticks out as different because of her extreme minority status and therefore appears unusual.

Even when a professional working woman ignores the labels associated with being different than society's expectations she still encounters a number of difficulties. Her behavior is circumspect no matter what she does. 1) If she behaves "like a man" to fit with the prevailing behaviors in the male organization she is considered unfeminine, abberant, inappropriate. For example, behavior such as aggression may be viewed as unfeminine because it is uncommon in women. It makes everyone nervous. If she is unaccustomed to this behavior she may also be uncomfortable and probably not convincing in the role she is playing. 2) If she behaves "like a woman" to be congruent with her sense of self she is seen as inadequate for working with male associates and for male clients in the business world. 3) If she behaves in a businessman manner, i.e. as any good male businessman would, making decision, being ambitious, etc., she often is perceived for how she appears, that is as a woman, rather than for how she acts, that is as a traditionally defined businessman.

If male and female behaviors are different, then what are the appropriate behaviors for management. According to Wood's interviewees playing management roles does not mean playing male roles. Both men and women stressed this yet

they contradict themselves about what women do and ought to do thus indicating confusion on their parts. (Woods, 1975, p. 40) These men and women, it should be noted, have had experience working with women in management and thus have proof of the pudding where as men and women who have had no personal experience to depend on are much more skeptical of women managers, that is more prejudiced.

Men by their singular presence in business until the very most recent history, have defined by their behaviors, what management is or ought to be. Management positions require some traditionally defined masculine behaviors such as competitiveness, objectivity, ability to take risks, and make decisions. According to Schein's research with male and female managers throughout the United States, characteristics defined as managerial are also those characteristics that are defined as masculine. (Schein, 1973, p. 75)

With recent interest in humanizing organizations and the advent of the human relations movement traditionally defined female behaviors are being called into the organizational arena and accepted as essential to improving organizational functioning. Human relations concepts and larger numbers of women in management roles perhaps complicate the situation. What presently constitutes good management behavior is still male dominated but now the range includes previously considered non-managerial traditionally feminine behaviors at least in some parts of the organization. Within specific organizations humanizing aspects are not always accepted and male managers may continue to require traditional management behaviors and these managers are hard to convince and thus act to perpetuate the status quo.

Women face other problems as a result of being different than men. Women don't have the connections important to moving smoothly in an organization. There is no "old boy network" for women. When women actually do develop business networks they do not use them to the same degree as men use their networks. (Albrecht, 1975, p. 67) Women's networks are less often significant

in helping women find jobs for instance. Rather than being professionally oriented to foster advancement of careers, the female organizational network is often egalitarian to the point of rendering it impotent.

If women get too cozy with the men they work with or their bosses they are setting a course for destruction. The Cunningham incident at the Bendix Corporation is a good example of how a woman stands to be the loser no matter what the circumstances. Whether or not a woman sleeps her way to the top she may be accused of that especially if she passes male counterparts in her rise up the corporate ladder.

Women have to make it on their own, as it should be, but this often entails a great deal more work for her than for her male counterpart. According to Day "for males rapid advancement tends to go to those who are more effective and who have more influence. For females, rate of advancement is unrelated to effectiveness" (Day, 1972,p.359). Researchers have no trouble finding bias against women in management according to Garland and Price. (1977, p. 29)

The woman has to prove not only herself but the basic female characteristics she is seen to represent. This is especially true if she is the first or one of the first women managers in an organization. On the success of these "front line" women rests the success of all women.

Women in managerial positions must chose a direction. A person whose behavior is inconsistent in the business world or who flounders will not make it into significant places in management.One of the commonly assumed characteristic flaws of women is this lack of direction and goals. Women have to know what they can and will do. They have to be prepared to act appropriately and decisively. This may be difficult considering what I have outlined previously. Women can't act feminine or they are seen as inadequate. They can't act masculine or they are seen as unusual. How then, can women be clear and forward moving?

I'd like to explore how the managerial woman deals with this double bind

situation she constantly finds herself in. I would also like to explore the costs sustained by women to their identity and the subsequent effects on their careers.

Although I will not deal directly with the effects on the personal lives outside the organization it should be remembered that there obviously is a carry-over. A number of consequences are seen by the somewhat different life style of the professional working women. For example a larger percentage of professional working women are single than are single in the population as a whole and these women have fewer children, and more are childless. Although Larwood and Wood would have use believe that "[a woman] may appear masculinely competent at her work, but traditionally feminine outside the work role" (Larwood & Wood, 1977, p. 38) I believe the alteration of roles that they suggest would likely be experienced as a split personality of sorts and quite hard on the identity. But maintaining a consistent identity at home and work may also be difficult.

There are several areas I'd like to discuss in relation to exploring women's identities and their careers.

First, what is the point of departure for the prospective woman manager? That is, how does a woman get her hands on the bottom most rung of the managerial ladder in readiness for the ascent upwards?

Second, What kinds of behaviors will bring success for a woman in a managerial role in business?

Thirdly, How does the women manager perceive herself in the managerial role.

Fourthly, Is a woman likely to alter her behavior in order to, move into a management position and what are the reasons she would alter her behavior?

Finally, is there stress associated with the behaviors a woman assumes in order to work as a manager and what problems are precipitated by this stress?

First, what is the point of departure for the prospective woman manager? From all the evidence it appears that women have much further to traverse before they reach that point of departure into management than do men.

"The literature indicates" says Broverman, "that men and masculine characteristics are more highly valued in our society than are women and feminine characteristics. Moreover, both boys and girls between six and ten express greater preference for masculine things and activities than female activities... and more women than men recall having wished they were of the opposite sex." (Broverman, et.al., 1972, p. 65) This leads inevitably to women's developing a negative self-concept.

This negative self-concept discourages women from, even in wild imagining, to view themselves as managers. They don't see themselves in this kind of position and don't plan for such an event. "Theory and research on career choice points to the importance of a person's self-concept as a determinant of vocational preferences. Other things being equal, people will choose careers that are consistent with their beliefs about themselves" says Korman. (In Terborg, 1977, p. 647) Women, as a rule, don't see themselves as managers and thus don't choose that career option. Instead of getting outside support Terborg suggests the opposite occurs for women. "Data suggests that women's self-perceptions and pressures of vocational counselors serve to inhibit [women's] decisions for management careers." (p. 647)

If they take the uncommon road for women and head toward management they must expend a good deal more energy in order to begin a career in management than do men. They must first convince themselves or have other convince them that they have capabilities. Once women choose a career they then must be atypical for their sex and plan and set goals. Not an easy task given the prevailing conditions.

Apparently early impressions in an organization are important for vertical mobility, the indicator of success, and the favored reward system. According to Rosabeth Kanter, a few people are initially placed in "fast tracks" after they have been sized up by higher ups. These "fast track" people receive review at more regular intervals. Others find themselves stultified in positions with little opportunity for upward mobility. Because the opportunities are few these individuals may be less committed to the organization, whereas those in "fast track" positions tend to "develop attitudes and behaviors that impel them further along the track" with greater work commitment and higher aspirations. (1977, p. 158) It tends to become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Women are commonly perceived stereotypically and relegated to the positions with low opportunities and are then observed as fitting the stereotypic behaviors for women because low opportunity prospects discourage attitudes and behaviors necessary for upward mobility. Again the catch 22.

Apparently many women reach the bottom of the hierarchical ladder somewhat unintentionally. According to Jane Adams (1979) who interviewed sixty successful women who made it to the top, there is a consistent pattern in getting to the point of departure. These successful women began to plan careers only when they discovered that they <u>were being successful</u>. They then changed their perceptions about work from doing a <u>job</u> to having a <u>career</u>. It was the acquisition of a point of departure that allowed these women to set goals. We see another example of this kind of successful-woman-syndrome in Congress. Women make it into Congress almost entirely by the door their departing husbands hold open to them. They do not make it on their own.

There are of course exceptions of women who are clearly directed and motivated and work to get what they want. I suggest however, that in many cases these women simply start differently. They are often still subject to many of the same difficulties that other women face while attempting to fit

into the male establishment.

Once a women has begun to work toward a managerial role or is in a management position what must she do? What kinds of behaviors will bring success for a women in a managerial role?

Loring and Wells (1972) in their book Breakthrough: Women in Management list numerous traits that are highly valued when exhibited by males such as aggressiveness, objectivity, dominance, self-confidence, and so on. Yet these traits are not those highly valued in females. Women are instead valued for exhibiting traits such as tactfulness, gentleness, quietness and strong need for security. (p. 103) How does the tactful, gentle, quiet, insecure woman make progress in business? She probably doesn't. What happens when a woman exhibits traits highly valued in men? Probably an immediate reaction is confusion on the part of her associates because they are unfamiliar with these behaviors in women or don't expect women to behave this way. This reaction is likely to be followed by a negative reaction: anger at, fear of, dislike for, the behaviors and perhaps the woman herself.

Martha Williams (1975) gives us an idea of how women may behave and the outcomes of those behaviors. She says "It is entirely conceivable that women will perform certain tasks differently and although they may utilize strategies which are no less logical or worthy, they may be criticized simply because their style is different, the intrinsic assumption being that different equals wrong" (p. 57).

Cassell (1977), who has recently done a sociological study of women's organizations suggests that women's behaviors may be well intentioned and humanistic but they are often deterrents to accomplishing tasks. Some women's groups she notes are based entirely on equality among members, are structureless, and have no distinct leader. The epitome of such organizations' ineffectiveness is labelled by Cassell as "decision by exhaustion." Such feminine type approaches to organization can not succeed in present day business.

How does the successful woman perceive herself; the woman who deals well with her male associates and clients? Successful women themselves seem to be confused not so much by what they do but by what they should do or what they are expected to do. Some of them find themselves successful and just continue whatever it is that they are doing. What about the woman who is hoping to be successful? If she is lucky she will be catalyzed into success but the requisite ingredients may remain a mystery to her.

One successful woman discusses her idea of a successful approach with the example of the "female corporate jock." A jock is typically, she says, what the successful male is: "competitive, assertive, resourceful and hard working." Women somehow need to be like this male she says, in a "feminine style." She attributes her own success to being aggressive and fitting in as one of the guys. (Jewell, 1977, p. 115-123) There is an inconsistency here for behaviors in the "feminine style" is in opposition to behaviors of a "jock" which certainly is a term of masculine derivation.

Another successful woman manager indicates her lack of clarity about how to fit into the male organization. She says "I don't know how to be one of the boys, and often it doesn't occur to me until too late that perhaps I should have been" (Adams, 1979, p. 91).

Even women whose success indicates that their behaviors are accomplishing what they want have difficulty dealing with characteristics that are not typical to the female mode such as: toughness, competitiveness, ambition, manipulation, and aggressiveness. (Adams, p. 116)

Successful women may know how to do it but they aren't sure how they arrived at that point. A high percentage of women interviewed by Adams labelled themselves as independent. Yet they felt that that independence was unnatural for women. Still this independence was classified by them as one of the most important rewards of their success. (1979, p. 193)

These women are behaving, according to traditional definitions, like men. They feel they are behaving differently than women. Have these women in fact changed a good deal from one type of behavior to a different type of behavior in order to fit into the organization and become successful?

Successful women do not have a clear perception of themselves. In fact, Hennig (1971) found that it took some time for women to be aware of a conflict situation within themselves. It was only after the woman manager reached the upper middle management levels, and thus had been within the business realm for a number of years, that she became aware of the conflict between being a woman and being a manager. (p. 8)

Why would women change their behaviors? There are a number of situational and personal reasons that would suggest women in organizations are likely to change their behaviors to fit the prevailing mode.

First lets look at the situational reasons which would encourage change. The prospective managerial woman is greatly outnumbered. Kanter (1977) states that all managers, male as well as female, face enormous conformity pressures. The blueprint IBM executive whose characteristics are monitored right down to the color and manufacturer of his socks is an example. This conformity develops as a means to deal with the amorphousness of the organizational hierarchy. It produces, as well, a means of control by only permitting entrance by those who fit the mold. (p. 48,52)

Women start off behind the eight ball as they can't fit the mold because of feminine physique, are out of style in the uniform socks, and can't always find a good fit in a Brooks Brothers suit.

It is far easier to change her than it is to change others to fit her behaviors. Women are in a minority position; they compelled to change in order to improve interaction within the organization. In addition, Ravenna Helson (1972) points out that professionals may set up arbitrary restrictions for the purpose

of keeping a distinctive "elite" as a means to maintain superiority and power. (p.41) In the case of managerial women, requiring certain kinds of unfamiliar or contradictory behaviors may prevent women from being successful and thus infiltrating the ranks allowing the maintenance of this "elite".

How are individual behaviors changed? The way to change behaviors most permanently is to change attitudes first and then because of a need for cognitive consistency, behaviors will also change to be congruent with these new attitudes. Herbert Kelman (1971) and other social psychologists (Bennis, Benne, Chin, Schein) have described individual change. The lowest level of influence that can produce change is available to the person(s) who can reward or punish in almost any fashion. In an organization superiors are therefore going to have a strong influence in changing a woman or man to comply with the expected behaviors. If for instance, the managerial woman likes and respects her boss she is even more likely to change by what Kelman calls "internalizing" these respected attitudes.

The woman manager's personal or internal reasons for change are not always at the conscious level. I have already discussed the issue that women tend to have a poor perception of themselves as to their abilities in arenas like management particularly. As a rule they do not acknowledge their abilities but if they find themselves successful they often attribute that success to luck whereas men are much more likely to attribute success to their own abilities. This poor perception of self, then, makes them far more vulnerable to influence and thus change. If the woman manager does not feel she is very capable or talented why should she stick by her behaviors? She probably won't. In addition, women don't have a clearly defined personal ideology, in the sense of clear directions or purposes, as do men. A piecemeal ideology is susceptible to alteration.

Another personal reason that women are likely to change their behaviors within an organization is lack of experience with the managerial role.

All employees must "learn the ropes" in a new organization and even in a new position within the organization. They must be socialized as Kanter and Terborg and others suggest. Women like men, who are new to the system, watch and listen to pick up appropriate behaviors for this particular situation from models. This kind of learning is defined as imitation because of the manner used to accomplish the task of learning. Unlike males, however, females have had less experience with certain organizational behaviors for example aggressiveness or directness whereas most males have had experience with these types of behaviors in masculine activities they engaged in in earlier years. Women are imitating male behaviors.

"Most working women," Terborg points out,"probably are not qualified for management positions. This is not meant to suggest that women lack potential for the job, but that the cumulative effect of past discrimination have prevented women from gaining necessary skills and experience." (1977, p. 649) Women, it seems, change in managerial roles. According to the findings in a 1976 dissertation "professional roles require women managers to develop masculine characteristics" (Banfield). Other evidence leads to the same conclusion. Virginia Schein suggests that the basis of success for women in management, in the present organizational climate, is based on women's acceptance of stereotypic male characteristics. (1975, p. 343)

There is the question of whether, in fact, managerial women are simply different then other females in their behavioral styles from early years. This is quite likely. (Williams described three possible explanations for successful women managers: the enrichment hypothesis, the deviance hypothesis, and the idiosyncratic career path hypothesis. Each of these hypotheses has the similarity that successful women are viewed as different from the norm of women. (1975, p. 52-53)) Evidence indicates, however, that this is not a sufficient explanation in itself. Men must be socialized; the difference

being only that women's changing may be more dramatic and difficult than for men as they are further from typical manager behaviors whose characteristics are more closely aligned with masculine behaviors.

Women's changes are likely to be different in degree and kind from those changes that males experience. In one study of women in middle management it was found that "sacrifying femininity, fear of success, and reluctance to assert themselves in male domains were viewed as the limitations" in their managerial experiences. (Banfield) If women change some basic identifying characteristics, those behaviors that are classications of femininity, as I have suggested, then the types of stress that these women are exposed to is likely to be of greater magnitude and more permeating than the stress experienced by men.

Until quite recently it was felt that women were less susceptible to psychophysiological disorders caused by stress such as ulcers, high blood pressure and possible heart attack or stroke. Women were believed to be some how more resilent because of biological differences, particularly hormonal differences. But as women are entering more stressful jobs it appears as if this original assumption was erroneous. Because the percentage of women in managerial positions is still quite small, and most of those have not been in these positions for very many years, it is still not clear but the available data indicates that women are just as prone to stress due to managerial positions, and are likely to suffer the same physiological consequences as men. I believe the already overwhelming stress of the managerial role is exacerbated for women by the fact that women must behave differently than they are accustomed to behave in this non-female setting of business.

Throughout this paper I have pointed to various things that would be likely to produce change in women in a managerial position. Change in itself is stressful according to Holmes and Masuda. The more drastic the change the

the greater the effect it can have on the physical and psychological well being of the individual. I have tried to point out that changes in something as basic as identity could be quite a stressful happening that has both physical and psychological ramifications.

Women would not typically fit into the Type A Personality that is described by Friedman and Rosenman (1960) who outline the characteristics of Type A people as those prone to heart attack. Women would not be typified as Type A people because they do not typically possess the Type A characteristics such as aggressiveness, ambition, involvement in competitive activities, sense of urgency. But it appears that the successful woman manager may, in fact, have to develop some of these very characteristics, that is, change her behavior toward that of the Type A Personality in order to be successful and thus be more prone to heart attack.

In addition to the stress of changing some identity distinquishing behaviors women have other stresses they face that their male counterparts are exempted from. Rosabeth Kanter discusses the issue of tokenism which finds women numerically dominated by men. For women this also creates stress because these women represent, whether they wish to or not, all women. They can not let themselves fail. Successful women are aware of this pressure and often also acknowledge a sense of isolation due to the lack of other women to share their experiences with.

In summation the woman manager is faced with some enormous difficulties. She is expected to change much that is basic to her identity and she is thus presented with even larger stresses than her male manager counterpart. The women manager is indeed caught in a double bind situation and the consequences to her psychological and physical well being are likely to be quite large.

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